

GRACE CHURCH VISITOR

A MONTHLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE GRACE REFORMED CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL.

VOLUME 1.

FORT WAYNE, IND., JANUARY, 1889.

NUMBER 1.

SPIRITUAL DECLENSION.



STRANGERS have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.—*Hosea 7: 9*. Thus the prophet Hosea rebuked Ephriam of his backslidings and his alienations from God.

The gray hairs upon the head are an evident token of a decline in life. The swelling of the bud is the sign of the coming summer. The yellow leaf tells of the approach of winter. The frost sprinkled here and there upon the head tells of the departing summer and of the coming winter of old age. The gray hairs here and there upon the head tell of the wasting away of physical strength; they are the foot-prints of "Father Time" left behind him in his flight over our heads. In some way or other there are tokens left for us of the growth upon us of the years. The worm that gnaws at the heart of the plant, may itself be imperceptible, but the withering of the branches tells of the failing of life. Decline in life is always attended with some tangible evidences of decay.

The "gray hairs here and there upon him" are tokens of Ephriam's decline in spiritual life. Ephriam has fallen a silly victim to sin and vice. "Strangers have devoured his strength," "yet he knoweth not." The warnings are manifest but they are unheeded. There is an astonishing proclivity on the part of many to pass by, Ephriam-like, all the signs and warnings which are upon them of their sins, and of their decline in spiritual life.

Declensions in spirituality are not without their clear, and well-defined signs and warnings. We once saw, in midsummer a stately forest tree, with here and there upon its branches a blasted leaf. To all other appearances this tree was in full life. The

blasted leaves seemed to raise a false alarm. But a closer examination, revealed the fact that at heart this tree was both dead and rotten. In looking out upon the church, and seeing here and there a sprinkle of frost, upon some heads more, upon some others less, we are admonished by these signs, of the true condition of the hearts of these people. In some the spiritual life, once so full of promise, has suffered a fearful collapse. Possibly unknown to themselves, yet the signs indicate that the new life begun within them is dying out, root and branch. The apostate Judas evinces well defined signs of his decline in grace, and in his love for the Master, even a long time before, he becomes the avowed betrayer.

Is there not some danger that some of our Lord's followers of to-day, are suffering themselves to decline in their devotions for the Master, are waning in their spiritual life. What shall we say of the spirit of avorice, of fault-finding, luke-warmness, morbid and stupid sense of sin? Are not these indications of a low ebb of heart-life? Ah, yes. Be admonished by all these signs of a deplorable state of heart and of the perils of soul. Frost tells of the approach of winter. Gray hairs are the signs of decline. These are warnings, but too often neglected warnings. Some wear a false hair to hide the gray. Warnings unheeded and dispised finally land the soul in a state of hardness of heart. Death and a man, so runs the story, once made a bargain, the man stipulating that death should send him so many warnings, before he came again. One day years after to his amazement, the King of Terrors stood before him. The man said you have broken the bargain and clung to life. No warnings? His eyes dim, ears dull, gums toothless, spare and thin were the hoarlocks upon his bent and palsied head, the step infirm. These death's heralds had come, not too late, but all in vain. Salvation neglected—the soul lost.

Let us be admonished of our state of heart, by the warnings which are sent

unto us. Lest some day the King of Terrors will meet us, and call us to judgment. And we shall find, that we are unprepared to meet our God.

AFFECTION.

WE sometimes meet with men who seem to think that any indulgence in an affectionate feeling is weakness.

They will return from a journey and greet their families with a distant dignity, and move among their children with the cold and lofty splendor of an iceberg, surrounded by its broken fragments. A father had better extinguish his boy's eyes than take away his heart.

Who would not rather lose the greatest earthly possessions than lose the sympathy and affection of friends?

Who would not rather bury his wife than bury his love for her?

Who would not rather follow his child to the grave than entomb his parental affection?

Cherish then your heart's best affections. Indulge in the warm and gushing emotions of filial, parental, and fraternal love. God is love. Love God, love everybody and everything that is lovely.

Teach your children to love—to love the rose, the robin; to love their parents; to love their God. Let it be the studied object of their domestic culture, to give them warm hearts, ardent affection. Bind your whole family together by these strong cords. You cannot make them too strong. Religion is love; love to God, love to man.

The young ladies of Grace Church will give a "crazy tea" at the church on the evening of the 14th of February, from 5:30 until 9. They desire to make this one of the most enjoyable occasions of the season. A good supper will be furnished, beside other attractions. Come spend an evening with us, we bid you *thrice welcome*.

GRACE CHURCH VISITOR.

25 Cents per Year.

REV. A. K. ZARTMAN, A. M., - - EDITOR.

BOARD OF MANAGERS: REV. A. K. ZARTMAN, ELDER F. D. PAULUS, DEACON H. P. VORDERMARK.

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA, JANUARY, 1889.

GRACE CHURCH VISITOR.

LITTLE Grace Church is entering upon a new phase of work and experience. A monthly paper is to be issued in the interest of the church and Sabbath-school. The pastor has been asked to assume the editorship-in-chief of this paper. For his support in its management, he has been assigned two competent co-workers, Elder F. D. Paulus, and Deacon H. P. Vordermark. A guarantee has also been given that in any cases of emergency, the other members of the church consistory, will come to the help of the Board of Managers. We are also quite confident that in our work we may fully rely upon a free and cheerful support of the entire church, and of the many friends of the church.

We shall aim to make this paper instructive and helpful to its patrons. It shall be published in the interest of sobriety and vital goodness. We shall hope that through these columns our readers may be informed of the work and growth of Grace Church, and also of our other Reformed Churches in the city and in the country.

We start out in this new field of work for the church, conscious, in part at least, of what may follow in the way of new experiences. To wield the sword in the pulpit is often-times the source of many unpleasant sensations. Criticisms are cheap. They are like milk and honey, without money and without price. What it shall be to wield the pen remains to be experienced, but we hope there may be grace sufficient.

We wish to come before our friends and readers in this issue very kindly, and with a very affectionate and cordial greeting. We wish you well, and hope to do you good. Give us your sympathy, and your good will. Give us your support. Give us twenty-five cents, and you shall meet us "face to face" once a month, throughout this goodly year of 1889. What more could we promise you. What more could we ask of you.

RECRUITING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

MRS. A. K. ZARTMAN.

FOR several months past Grace Sunday School has been growing in interest and numbers. Some of the chairs so long vacant are being filled.

To all who are interested in Grace Church this will be encouraging. But there still remains much room for improvement. There are many places yet to be filled. The Sunday School is the nursery, and hope of the church. The instructions and counsels of pious parents are here confirmed, and made stronger, and many who never hear of the way of life in the home, are here instructed therein.

How many earnest and devoted Christians, have been made such through the influence of the Sunday School. As years roll by and those who have been the pillars in churches, are one by one gathered above, the Sunday School ushers young and vigorous Christians into the church to fill the vacant places, of those who are called away. Let us thank God for this blessed institution, and with united effort strive to enlarge our Sunday School, and extend its influence.

There is a work here for every teacher and scholar, many beautiful flowers are still blooming in the desert. They have never sent forth their fragrance within the walls of the sanctuary. They are waiting to be gathered by loving attention and kind words.

There is no reason why, at the close of this year our school should not number two hundred or more, if the right effort is put forth. Let us not be afraid of being too zealous in winning jewels for the Master.

How can we secure a larger attendance at our Sunday School?

By inviting children and young people to attend. Do not wait for opportunities. As you meet them on the street, in the home, in places of business, speak to them kindly; young hearts are always ready to respond, and your interest in them will secure their interest in you. Thus you may be able to win them for the Master.

An infant class teacher once resolved that she would speak to every child with whom she came in contact, and invite them into her class. The result was that in a short time the class of fifteen scholars, became the class of one hundred little hearts.

What teacher does not long to do so grand and glorious a work for the Lord?

We should be persistent in our efforts, never growing weary in well doing. In one of our recent Sabbath School lessons, we learned how four men came bearing the paralytic to the Savior. If then it should require a number of us to bring one soul into kingdom, let that effort be made.

It may require four visits from a teacher to bring back a negligent, and indifferent scholar. It may require four invitations to bring a young friend into the Sunday School and church.

It may require an extraordinary effort, or a sacrifice to lead others to the cross.

Let us be willing to make sacrifices, to offer prayers, and labor diligently that Christ's kingdom may be advanced in our midst. The apostle Paul has set us a good example, as recorded in acts 9:6 asking the question Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

On January 15, at 4 p. m., at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Kirkham, on Soy Run avenue, their daughter Jennie was united in marriage to Perry Archer of this city. The bride and groom were made the recipients of a number of very handsome presents. The occasion was altogether a very happy and pleasant one. Our young friends have taken rooms at 48 West Wayne street.

On New Year's night one of our families, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Keuhle, of 129 Wells street, was bereaved of their dear little babe Ursa, aged nine months. This was a very promising and sweet little child, and greatly beloved by the family and friends. But she was not long for this world. The sweet and fragrant little life only began to unfold, when the chilling frosts came, and the flower withered and faded away.

She is now a transplanted flower,
Blooming in Eden's bower.

In the afternoon of January 3, after a brief service at the home, the little form was borne to its final resting place in Lindenwood cemetery, where it shall repose in peaceful slumbers, until resurrection morn. The family has the sympathies and prayers of the pastor, and the entire church.

GRACE REFORMED CHURCH.

Our Church Parlors on East Washington St., between Barr and Lafayette streets.

SERVICES.

Sabbath morning,	10:30
Sabbath evening	7:30
Sunday School,	9:30
Teachers' meeting Sabbath evening	6:30
Prayer meeting Wednesday evening	7:30

Come, and welcome to these services.
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BREVITIES.

Grace Church Visitor.

May its visits be full of cheer.

It would like to visit you once a month.

The Ladies Society is preparing for a fair, which they expect to hold, about the 1st of March.

THIS issue of Grace Church VISITOR will number five hundred; sample copies will be mailed to the members of Grace Church and our friends.

Rev. M. C. Schaaf of Huntington made the pastor's family several pleasant calls recently. Rev. Schaaf has many warm friends in the city.

Mrs. Zartman's class in the Sunday school, of young men and young ladies is growing. We are glad to see this class organized and doing so well.

The Ladies Sewing Circle meets Thursday afternoon Feb., 7, at the home of Mrs. Ersig, 129 Monroe street. Why not all the ladies turn out?

Mother Bolander has been confined to the house for a number of weeks, on account of sickness. She has the sympathy and prayers of the whole church. We hope she may soon recover.

Read the advertisements on the fourth page. The business firms advertised there, are very kind to give us their cards, and thus help us. Favor them with your patronage, when you need anything in their lines of business, and thus reciprocate their favors.

LADIES Missionary and Aid Society of Grace Church was organized September 1, 1888, with seventeen members. Its present membership is forty. The Society has been doing a good work. So far it has already raised \$125. The Society at its monthly meeting Jan. 3, elected the following officers: President, Mrs.

A. K. Zartman; Vice President, Mrs. F. D. Paulus; Secretary, Miss Emma Ersig; Treasurer, Mrs. A. McClure. All the ladies of Grace Church should be in this Society. Friends of the church and cause can also become members, and are invited to do so. The regular monthly meeting will be held at the church Feb 7, at 7:30 p. m. Come.

THE pastor of Grace Church is for the present supplying the Salem's Reformed Church, located some twelve miles north of the city. The services are held each alternate Monday evening. These people enjoy the preaching of the word of God. The attendance is always large and the outlook for the Reformed Church in this community is very promising. Recently the people of this church sent one of their members to the city with a full supply of grain for the pastor's horse. They have the pastor's thanks. This is one way in which people may show their gratitude toward their pastor, and their appreciation of the Gospel.

SEASON OF REFRESHING.

BEGINNING with the week of prayer Grace Church entered upon a series of special services, continuing for three weeks. During the first and second weeks the weather was very unfavorable, and many of the members of the church failed to be in attendance upon these meetings. During the third week of services, the attendance was much larger, and the interest was good. Those who were in attendance upon these meetings felt themselves greatly benefited. A deeper work of grace was wrought in their hearts, and they received a new baptism of the Holy Spirit. The church has been revived, and the indications are that for sometime to come this special work of grace may continue, and that there may be many more accessions to the church. The pastor hopes to devote several evenings of each week during the month of February, to such special meetings, which shall be intended to build up the people in holiness, and for the conversion of souls. During these meetings there were a great many requests made for prayer. Some of those who were made the subjects of special prayer, were happily converted and gathered into the kingdom. So far some nine souls have been added to the church. Many

others are available. Let our prayers continue. Let them be earnest and in faith. The Lord will own this work and bless it. Too many of the Lord's people to-day are only followers and not workers. The Lord send upon us the spirit of soul-saving.

THREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN FORT WAYNE.

THE St. John's Congregation on West Washington street, which is the oldest, has a membership of 661. Had fifty accessions during the past classical year. Rev. Charles Schaaf is the efficient pastor of this church. Under his charge the Congregation has been having a steady and healthy growth. During the past season the church building was repaired at quite a cost. They have a beautiful and commodious place of worship.

The Salem Reformed Church has a membership of 350. During the past year twenty-eight souls were added to this church. Rev. Charles F. Kriete is the devoted pastor of this congregation. Under his pastorate this church has been ably managed, and is in a growing condition. This congregation has been very devoted, and earnest, and self-sacrificing in its work for the Master. During the past year \$250 were contributed for benevolence, and \$1,140 for congregational purposes. This congregation is to have soon, a pipe organ, which will be purchased by the Young People's Society.

The latest Reformed Church organized in the city is the Grace Church, having their church parlors on East Washington street, between Barr and Lafayette streets. This congregation was organized nearly six years ago, has had a rapid growth and is in a prosperous state. The present pastorate began some eight months ago. The work of this church is now again fairly started. There have been a number of accessions to this church recently, and the outlook is indeed promising. Its present membership is about one hundred and seventy-five. This congregation is for the present occupying its church parlors, where all the services are held, but it hopes to erect its main building in the near future. The total receipts of this church during the past year aggregate the amount of \$1,516. Its Sunday school is doing a good work.

GRACE CHURCH VISITOR.

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